THE

APPEAL

OF THE

PEOPLE OF ULSTER,

TO

THEIR COUNTRYMEN,

AND TO THE

EMPIRE AT LARGE.

IRISHMEN!

OUR beſt Citizens are entombed in Baſtilles, or hurried on board Tenders, our Wives and our children are become the daily victims of an uncontrouled and licentious *foreign* ſoldiery.

IRISHMEN! ULSTER, one of your faireſt provinces, containing one-third of the population of the land—Ulſter, hitherto the pride and ſtrength of Ireland, is proclaimed and put under the bar of *Martial Law!* The Executive Government of the country has ſentenced us to military execution, *without trial,* and the Legiſlature of the Country has ſanctioned this illegal act *without inquiry!* The Conſtituted Authorities of the land (without condeſcending to examine into the exiſtence of our grievances, the truth of the outrages alledged againſt us, or the nature of the circumſtances that may have provoked them), have ſtigmatized us as objects of terror to the reſt of Ireland and of horror to the reſt of Europe.

What, you will naturally aſk, are your crimes?—Hear them: Our enemies ſay, that under the appellation of *United Iriſhmen,* and by means of illegal oaths, we have eſtabliſhed and organized a horrid ſyſtem of murder; that we are the avowed enemies of all order and good government, and finally, that our ultimate object is pillage, maſſacre, and plunder! Countrymen! theſe charges are FALSE! they are MALEVOLENT; for the only proof which our accuſers have pretended to adduce in their ſupport is, that in one whole province, where the ſervants of Government have, for the laſt four years, by a ſyſtem of premeditated perſecution, endeavoured to drive the people into inſurrection, a few individuals, who had rendered themſelves notorious by their vindictive purſuit of this ſyſtem, have, during the laſt ſix months, loſt their lives.—We do not defend theſe outrages; they give *us* more *real* grief than they do our enemies.

But,

But, how has it happened that the ſame horror was not expreſſed by the ſame perſons, when a civil war was for two years carrying on in the county of Armagh, againſt the Catholics, ſupported by *Magiſterial* exertions, and as it was ſaid by *Miniſterial* connivance? Do you not know, countrymen, that theſe cruel perſecutions were carried on by men, not only enjoying impunity, but boaſting that they were acting under the authority of Government? Do you not know that the ſame ſyſtem of tyranny and terror has been enforced with various ſucceſs in almoſt every part of the North? that Belfaſt has been dragooned? that our moſt virtuous inhabitants have been nearly decimated? that Magiſtrates have frequently iſſued forth, by day and by night, at the head of parties of the army, to ſcour the country, to burn the houſes, and impriſon the perſons of thoſe who are *ſuſpected* to love liberty? Can you then wonder, if men, who have made themſelves peculiarly obnoxious by their cruelties, ſhould ſometimes fall victims to *individual* vengeance? However you may lament in common with us, can you be ſurprized if the ſon, whoſe father has been torn from his family and illegally impriſoned, or carried on board the fleet; if the huſband, whoſe wife has been dragged from her *lying-in bed*, at the hour of midnight, and thrown into the ſtreet to ſee her houſe burned before her eyes; if the father, whoſe property has been deſtroyed, and his children caſt out into want and miſery;—Can you be ſurpriſed even if men, who are daily witneſſes to ſuch tranſactions, without redreſs, and without the ſhadow of legal authority, and who are themſelves ſuffering under a grinding perſecution, the acts of which cannot be eaſily particulariſed, but which, by its unceaſing operation, cruſhes and deſtroys;—Can you be ſurpriſed if men thus ſituated, *determined not to be forced into inſurrection*, ſhould ſeek to aſſuage their revenge, and vainly hope to ſtop the current of general calamity by the aſſaſſination of the moſt atrocious of their perſecutors? Do not, we beſeech you, falſely impute their acts to the moral depravity of any *body* of men.—No: if the hands of the inhabitants of the North were not reſtrained by the ſtrongeſt ties of duty and religion, the higheſt heads and moſt overbearing ſpirits of our oppreſſors would have long ſince expiated their tyranny.

We have told you, Countrymen, the charges exhibited againſt us—hear now the *facts*, and FOR THE TRUTH OF THEM WE SOLEMNLY APPEAL TO THE SEARCHER OF HEARTS. *We are under an obligation* (and we glory in it) to promote a brotherhood of affection among Iriſhmen of every religious perſuaſion. *We are united* in an organized ſyſtem, *not* to promote *murder*, *but* to promote *peace*; not to deſtroy *perſons* and *property*, but to ſave *both* from deſtruction. Laſtly, beloved Countrymen, we are moſt ſolemnly pledged (a pledge we will never forfeit) to co-operate with you in every temperate and rational meaſure for obtaining the freedom of our country, by a FULL AND ADEQUATE REPRESENTATION OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND, WITHOUT REGARD TO RELIGIOUS DISTINCTIONS.

Theſe are the *crimes* of Ulſter. They are the common crimes of Ireland. How ſhould it be otherwiſe, when they ariſe from the duty we owe to our Country and to our God? Yes, Iriſhmen, the ſacred flame has become general.—That which originated in Antrim has been reverberated from Cork, and all the intermediate ſpace, from Wicklow to Mayo, glows with the ſame enthuſiaſm. It has been our glory to raiſe the abutments—to you belongs the ſtill more glorious taſk of crowning the arch.

Our intentions have been, and ſtill are, to obtain the great objects of our purſuit, through the means of *calm diſcuſſion*, and their own unqueſtionable juſtice. The common enemy know that theſe are the moſt powerful and irreſiſtible weapons. It is, therefore, that they have practiſed upon us a ſyſtem of reiterated aggreſſion, unparalleled in the hiſtory of civiliſed nations, for the purpoſe of goading us into *inſurrection*, or driving us into *deſpair*. They have hitherto failed, and *they will ſtill fail*, thanks to that bountiful Being, who has enduced us with *Patience* as well as *Courage*.

We can, even yet, endure for our Country's ſake. But, Countrymen! is there not a point, beyond which forbearance becomes a crime, and human nature is incapable of enduring? Shall we be forced beyond that point? If we ſhould, our poor and feeble oppreſſors would find, that UNITED IRELAND could, in an inſtant, trample them to the duſt.

To our *national* armed force, whether MILITIA or YEOMANRY, we peculiarly appeal. Soldiers! when you took up arms to defend your *Country*, did you intend to turn them againſt your *Countrymen?* Was it to raiſe the Catholic againſt the Proteſtant, and the Proteſtant againſt the Catholic that you arrayed? Was it to ſupport an Adminiſtration which has brought your Country to the verge of deſtruction, by a wicked war againſt Liberty abroad, and a ſtill more wicked war againſt Liberty at home, that you ſwore allegiance? If you ſhould ever, with parricidal hearts, turn your arms againſt your Fellow-citizens, whoſe only crime is their patriotiſm, would you not feel that you were guilty of Treaſon, Rebellion and Perjury againſt your King, your Country, and your God? Think then in time, REMEMBER YOU ARE IRISHMEN? Remember that you muſt ſhortly anſwer for every act of *murder*, or even *pillage*, that you might be induced, by unjuſt orders, to commit, before that BEING who is the Avenger of the oppreſſed.

To the Britiſh Nation we alſo appeal! Is it criminal, Britons! to follow the example of your renowned Anceſtors? If *you* feel the defects in your Repreſentation, and if you are ſenſible that you, as well as we, have been precipitated into the moſt wicked and deſtructive wars, in conſequence of thoſe defects, can you poſſibly blame *us*, whoſe Repreſentation is infinitely more inadequate, for our peaceable exertions to remedy thoſe defects?—Shall Ireland be conſidered as hoſtile, becauſe

ſhe

ſhe has caught a ſpark of that holy fire which was kept alive in your Iſland, when ſurrounding Europe was ſunk under a barbarous Deſpotiſm? But you will be told that we wiſh to get rid of the *connection*. If that connection only exiſted in the manifold evils which have been heaped upon us by the preſent abominable Adminiſtration, we ſurely would wiſh for a ſeparation.

But, Fellow-ſubjects, connected as we are by the ties of blood—of a common language and polity; intimately connected as we are by our relative ſituation with each other and with the reſt of the world, as well as by our mutual wants and redundancies—ſo far from wiſhing to leſſen theſe ties of connection, we call upon, we entreat you to *unite* ſtill farther with us in the juſt and neceſſary work of REFORM. We conjure you, by the Manes of your *Lockes*, your *Sidneys*, your *Hampdens*, and your *Ruſſells*, to join us in a great and united effort to ſave the Empire from deſtruction by the only meaſure which can ſave it—*a radical Reform in the Repreſentation of the People.* The removal of your preſent wicked Miniſters will only operate as a temporary relief—the cauſe of all our evils will ſtill remain. Had not your Miniſter known that his *Influence*, owing to the defective ſtate of our Repreſentation, enabled him to draw from Ireland 150,000 men to recruit the Army, and 40,000 ſeamen to man the Fleet of the Empire, he would not ſo rapidly have ruſhed into this deteſtable War, which has brought you, as well as us, to the brink of ruin. Britons! remember the words of the moſt illuſtrious Stateſman that ever adorned your Country or directed your Councils—of that PITT who conducted the Empire to glory abroad whilſt he cheriſhed Liberty at home. In the year 1766, when Maſſachuſets was charged with Rebellion, as Ulſter is now, "I rejoice that "America has reſiſted," ſaid that great man. "Three millions "of people, ſo dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to ſubmit to be ſlaves, would have been fit inſtruments "to make ſlaves of the reſt. If America was to fall, (continued he) ſhe would fall like the ſtrong man; ſhe would embrace the pillars of the State, and pull down the Conſtitution with her. She has been wronged; ſhe has been driven "to madneſs by injuſtice: Will you puniſh her for the madneſs "you have occaſioned?"—His Councils ſucceeded—the obnoxious laws were repealed, and America ſat down contented.—Shortly after, the ſyſtem of coercion was again reſorted to, and *America was loſt.*

Finally, we appeal to the FATHER of the UNIVERSE, whoſe *Almighty Power* we invoke, to conduct us by the paths of Peace, to Liberty and Happineſs.

Belfaſt, April 14, 1797.

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